

AUSTRALIAN

# Forest History

SOCIETY Inc.

Newsletter No. 33

September 2002

*'... to advance historical understanding of human interactions with Australian forest and woodland environments.'*

Just when you think nothing is happening in the world of forest history and it's safe to edit the newsletter, issues emerge and material keeps arriving. It's a valuable reminder of the dynamism of our field, the breadth of people's interests, and the ongoing importance of forest and environmental debate, informed by a historical perspective. In an age of shorter attention spans, sound bites and superficial commentary on pressing environmental issues, the need for careful and rigorous debate, sensitive to people, places and events of the past, is as vital as ever. Members of the AFHS make important contributions to these discussions. Publication of our Hobart proceedings will provide another significant contribution to Australian forest history. With planning underway for our *sixth* conference, the society remains not only relevant but a vital forum for the interchange of ideas and the sharing of knowledge. Working as 'a friendly network', the society brings together a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, and encourages, as Stephen Legg recently noted, 'excellence in scholarship through informed debate'. In whatever directions our society heads in the coming years, let's ensure that this remains a primary objective.

Included in this newsletter are notices for the Annual General Meeting and a nomination and proxy voting form. Recent discussions within our ranks, both formal and informal, have canvassed the future of the society and its ongoing viability, our independence from external funding bodies, and the need to recruit new faces to maintain the basic functioning of the society. John Dargavel has made it clear that after so many years at the helm he can no longer bear so much of the burden. All members are urged to consider what kind of society they want to belong to, and how they can help to bring it about.

Our current committee consists of John Dargavel (President), Denise Gaughwin (Vice President), Kevin Frawley (Secretary), Fintan O'Laighin (Treasurer), Sybil Jack, Ken Jackson, Stephen Legg, Jenny Mills, John Banks, Brett Stubbs and Peter Davies.

Guest *Peter Davies*

Editor: *Historical and European Studies, La Trobe University, Melbourne 3086*

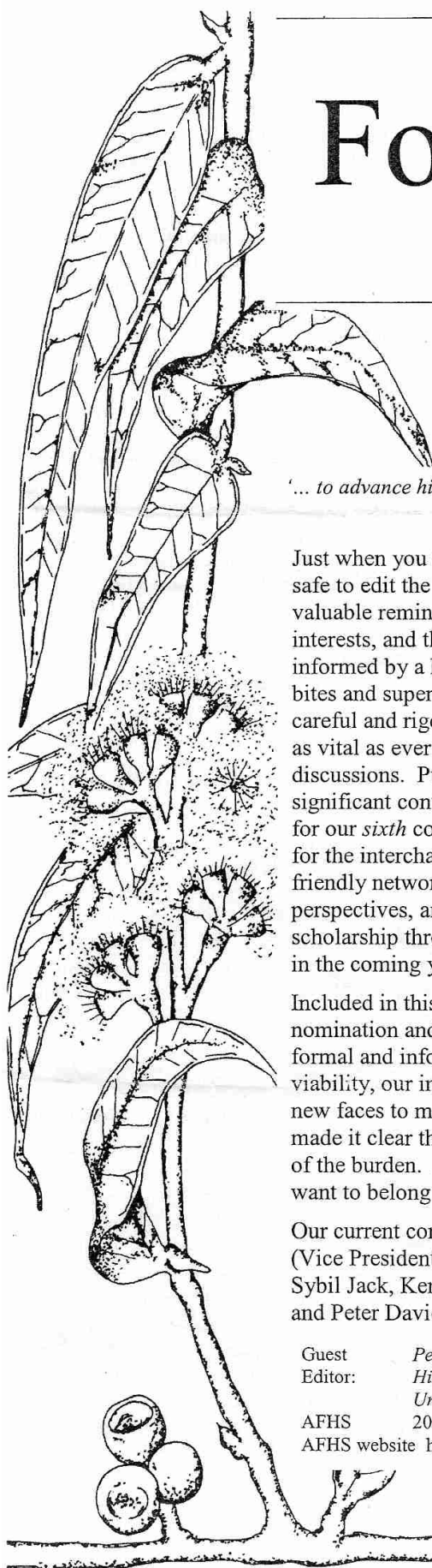
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### News of members

We welcome Julie Constable to the Society. Julie is a member of the Strzelecki Working Group, which is investigating ways of protecting remnant patches of forest in Victoria's South Gippsland in a formal reserve system. The region's tall eucalypt forests have been extensively logged and cleared since the 1880s for timber, farming and plantations.

Our esteemed president has been feeling very chuffed of late, because he has recently been awarded a 2002 NT History Grant to research the history of the paperbark lands of the Northern Territory. John and Ricki plan to return around 20 September.

### *Vale Cec Haley*

The long life of Cecil Haley (8 May 1910 – 17 May 2002), one of Queensland's founding foresters, was celebrated at the Annerley Catholic Church on 21 May 2002 by a large number of his friends, family and colleagues. Cec grew up in Nambour, the son of a railway man, and attended the Nambour Rural School 1917-1924. He followed his brother Martin to Nudgee College (1924-1928), where he excelled at sport and studies. Taking up a Forestry Scholarship, he attended the University of Queensland in 1929-1931, and the Canberra Forestry School in 1932. Cec married Cecilia (RIP January 2001) in 1938. He was the first officially designated Forest Research Officer, and retired as Conservator in 1975.

### Reviews

#### *The forest eco-centre at Scottsdale in Tasmania*

The newly opened forest eco-centre at Scottsdale in Tasmania is Forestry Tasmania's symbolic gesture towards a reconciliation of forestry with issues important to the Greens and the Wilderness Society. The small building is in a post-modernist architectural style in which there are no uprights or right angles, and as far as possible no corners, no horizontal parallels. As a result, it unfortunately looks somewhat like the crazy restaurant on Darling Harbour in Sydney, as if a glancing blow from a giant hammer has pushed an initially upright cone with its top cut off into the ground at an angle. The upper level is committed to the Forestry Tasmania offices. At the centre of the ground floor is an information centre staffed by volunteers, with free pamphlets, guides, books and artefacts for sale. The ground level is arranged so that visitors can follow a circular track from the entrance past presentations with small live plants intended to evoke the atmosphere of the forest, to various exhibitions, permanent and temporary, which are designed to show forest values

to the community, some of the most distinctive Tasmanian trees and the local history of Scottsdale—its pioneers and its industries. Limited space means that most of this is done either by short videos or by 'turn over' illustrations with informative captions. There is no hands-on experience of the forest, nor could there be as its location on the outskirts of this small north-eastern town puts it at some distance from the nearest surviving forest. Its location will clearly restrict much further development. Whether this was the ideal location for the centre may be doubted although the issue is now academic. Certainly there was a bitter local political fight over its positioning and to the outsider somewhere closer to the heritage areas would have seemed more appropriate. The centre has not been opened long enough to judge whether its didactic purpose is going to be realised. Time alone will tell whether Forestry Tasmania can build on these distinctly limited foundations or whether, like the struggling sample plants which line the internal track, the initiative will wither. One must hope that more generous funding will be forthcoming to enable a broader vision of the forests and the role of forestry in their preservation to be developed and made available to the public.

-Sybil Jack

### Places to Visit – Harcourt Arboretum (Oxford)

Four hundred yards south of Nuneham Courtenay village, Archbishop Harcourt, descendant of a family who came to England in the train of William the Conqueror, in 1830 ordered a pinetum on eight acres of acidic lower greensand. He planted species of conifer, new to Europe, from the west coast of North America. Later generations continued the planting until death duties obliged them to sell to the university estates, who have extended it to 55 acres. The mature conifers, sequoias and the collection of pines, such as the digger pine and the *Pinus ponderosa*, are spectacular, as are the cedars and the Acer Grove. In spring, the Bluebell Wood and The Meadow are an added attraction.

### Call for Papers

The *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, a refereed journal published by the University of New England, is seeking articles from scholars working in the field of Australian colonial history. To date, Journal issues have covered a broad range of topics including aspects of convict society, Australian religion, European-Aboriginal contact, popular sovereignty, Chartism, education, literary culture and the provincial press. The editors especially welcome

contributions from postgraduate students working in the field.

Enquiries about submissions should be directed to the editors:

Frank Bongiorno, email [fbongior@metz.une.edu.au](mailto:fbongior@metz.une.edu.au)

Norma Townsend, email [ntownse2@metz.une.edu.au](mailto:ntownse2@metz.une.edu.au)

## 12th International Conference of Historical Geographers

9-13 December 2003 – Auckland, New Zealand

This conference is hosted by the School of Geography and Environmental Science at the University of Auckland. It will pay special attention to relationships forged 'on the edge'. Located on the (leading) edge of the world, Auckland and New Zealand offer challenging settings and viewpoints for historical geographical research.

The following themes are suggested:

- Nature, Landscape and Environment
- Colony, Empire and Imperial Space
- Identities: Nation, Gender, Class, Ethnicity
- Farms, Food and Markets
- Historical Geographies of Aotearoa/ New Zealand
- Land Transformation
- Experiments in Society
- Maori Geography
- Historical Analysis in Geography
- Theory in Historical Geography
- Tourism, Leisure and Recreation
- Maps, Mapping and Exploration
- Population, Health and Society
- Science, Technology and Modernity
- Business Networks and Globalisation
- Contested Heritage
- City, Suburb and Countryside

An abstract of no more than 200 words should be submitted no later than 28 March 2003.

*Organising Committee:* Gordon Winder (Auckland), Eric Pawson (Canterbury), Mike Roche (Massey), Graeme Wynn (British Columbia), Erena Le Heron (Auckland), Matthew Henry (Auckland)

For further information or to register your interest contact

[www.geog.auckland.ac.nz/ichg2003](http://www.geog.auckland.ac.nz/ichg2003) or email: [ichg2003@sges.auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ichg2003@sges.auckland.ac.nz)

## Australian Forest Growers Biennial Conference

14-16 October 2002 – Albany, Western Australia

The 2002 Biennial Conference will be held in Albany WA over three days from 14 - 16 October. Albany boasts a wide range of historical sites, scenic locations (both inland and coastal) and boat tours (fishing, diving and scenic). Most significantly will be the opportunity to see the spectacular wildflower displays that are at their peak in October.

The Conference Structure will have 3 general themes, all aiming for practical and relevant presentations.

1. Social Aspects and Investments (tax, sustainability, values, impacts, codes, standards, roads, innovations)
2. Products and Marketing (bluegum, small logs, oil mallee, sandalwood, other species, carbon credits, energy, financial aspects, softwood, marketing processes)
3. Technical Aspects (Pruning, fire, inventory, native forest productivity, processing, herbicides and insecticides, silviculture, salinity, water balance and agroforestry).

### Tours

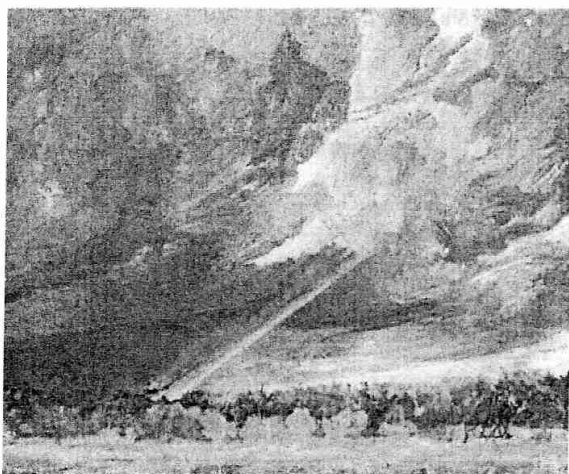
A 4-day pre-conference tour leaves Perth on Thursday 10th October and travels through the Southwest (pines, bluegums, heritage aspects, native forests and lots of fun)

Four in-conference tours will radiate out from Albany on Tuesday 15 October and will cover a mixture of pines, bluegums, oil-mallee, native forest (wet temperate) historical sites, scenic areas and likely cruising by the odd vineyard.

For more information about the 3 day conference and pre-conference tours, contact :

Kate Clarke (Conference Co-ordinator)  
PO Box 1248 West Perth 6005,  
Phone: 08 9322 6906  
fax 08 9322 1734  
email [kclarke@congresswest.com.au](mailto:kclarke@congresswest.com.au)

Geoff McArthur (Committee Chairman)  
c/- FIFWA, 55 Salvado Rd, Subiaco 6008  
Mobile 0412 55 69 84  
fax 08 9367 9001  
email [geoffmac@primus.com.au](mailto:geoffmac@primus.com.au)



*Beginning of the Wet*

### **Climate and Culture in Australia – a National Academies Forum**

25 – 27 September 2002

*Shine Dome, Australian Academy of Science, Canberra*

Climate figures daily in the news, but how well do we understand the role it plays in the society and culture of this, the El Niño continent?

'Climate and Culture in Australia' will draw together speakers from a range of disciplines to examine the experience of climate and our fascination with the weather. These are fertile grounds for exploring links between such fields as history, meteorology, art, politics, literature, archaeology and economics. Join us as we trace such connections, journeying from individual lives to institutional structures, from contemporary crises to deep-time narratives, from local knowledge to global systems.

*Topics include:* seasons and cycles, climatic limits, El Niño, climate change, as well as the elements - sun, wind and rain.

*Speakers:* Bill Bunbury, Daniel Connell, Tom Griffiths, Richard Grove, Clive Hamilton, Rod Home, Ian Lowe, Janet McCalman, Tony McMichael, Neville Nicholls, Libby Robin, Deborah Rose, Janis Sheldrick, Tim Sherratt, Mike Smith, and David Walker.

*Events:* Proceedings will open with an informal evening session exploring the history of the Bureau

of Meteorology – drinks, nibbles, mingling and memories. Join us also for the 'Wind and weather' dinner at the National Museum of Australia – a night of music and mystery on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin.

*Registration:*

Before 31 July : \$110 (full) / \$60 (student)

After 31 July : \$140 (full) / \$80 (student)

Day registration : \$80 (full) / \$45 (student)

Dinner: \$60 (full) / \$50 (student)

Registration includes opening night drinks, morning/afternoon teas and lunches. Plus entertaining speakers and stimulating discussion!

*More information:*

More details, including the full program, and a registration form are available from:

<http://ozhistory.info/weather/>

Or you can email us at [weather@ozhistory.info](mailto:weather@ozhistory.info)

*Organisers:*

*Tom Griffiths*, RSSS History, ANU. Ph: 02 6125 3345

*Neville Nicholls*, Bureau of Meteorology. Ph: 03 9669 4407

*Libby Robin*, CRES, ANU. Ph: 02 6125 5016

*Tim Sherratt*, RSSS History, ANU. Ph: 02 6125 4339

*Supported by:* National Academies Forum, Bureau of Meteorology, Australian National University, Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre and the National Museum of Australia.

### **Recent Journals**

*British Columbia Forest History Newsletter* 65 & 66, March & June 2002

These two recent issues include a detailed two-part account by Dave Wallinger of early silvicultural work in the interior of British Columbia. Wallinger worked with the Reforestation Division of the Canadian Forest Service from 1953 to 1988, replanting cutover areas with ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. He also traces improvements in nursery methods and seed harvesting over this period

The issue also notes several new publications in Canadian forest history.

*Light Railways* 166, August 2002

This latest edition is as lavishly illustrated as usual. It features articles on the Silkwood sugar cane

tramway in the Innisfail district during the 1950s, and the history of the Lukee steam locomotive now operating as a tourist railway in Red Cliffs, Victoria. In addition, there are numerous notices of books and other publications on sale through the Light Railway Research Society of Australia.

#### Publications noted

Balogh, B. 2002, 'Scientific Forestry and the Roots of the Modern American State: Gifford Pinchot's Path to Progressive Reform', *Environmental History* 7(2): 198-225.

Doughty, R W 2000, *The Eucalyptus: A Natural and Commercial History of the Gum Tree*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore; reviewed in *Journal of Historical Geography* 2000, 28 (2).

Menefy, D and Judd, W. 2002, 'Eucalypts: trees of the Future?', *New Zealand Geographic* 58 July-August: 44-61.

Richardson, D. 2000, *Forestry, People and Places: Selected Writings from Five Decades*, Business Media Services, Rotorua.

Tucker, R 2000, *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the World*, University of California, Berkeley.

Vader, J. 2002, *Red Gold: The Tree that Built a Nation*, New Holland, Sydney, 240 pp.

John Vader's original landmark study, *Red Cedar* (1987, Reed Books) paid tribute to one of Australia's foremost forest and timber trees. This revised version of the book is presented in a smaller format, but retains the evocative illustrations of the original account. Vader traces the history of exploitation of red cedar from the beginnings of European settlement in Port Jackson, extending along the New South Wales coast and up into Queensland. Topics covered include the activities of the early cedar-cutters up the Hunter, around the Illawarra and along the South Coast, and then later on up the north coast and into the 'Big Scrub' of north-eastern New South Wales. The early techniques of cedar-getting are described, along with the work of second and third-wave cutters in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century. The book concludes with an account of the largest trees, and the prized use of red cedar as a furniture and interior timber.

#### Miscellaneous

##### *Deadly threat to English oaks*

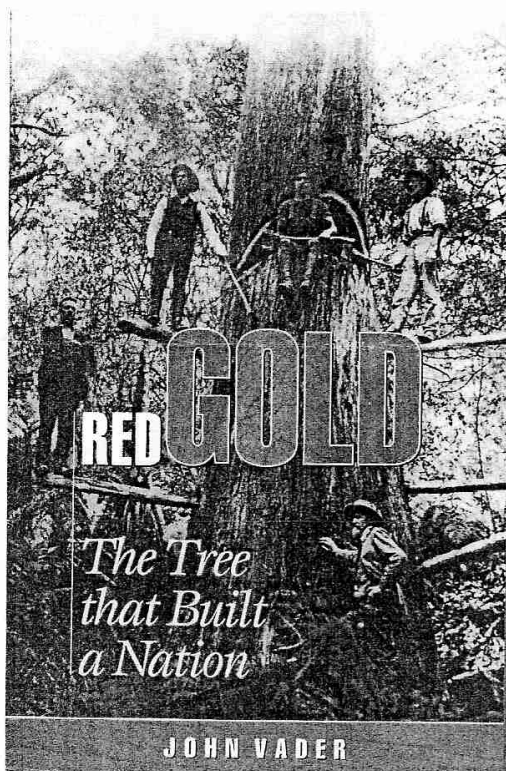
Alarm at the spread of Sudden Oak Disease (*Phytophthora ramorum*) in California and Oregon has prompted British authorities to ban the import of a range of wood and bark products from the United States, in a bid to protect Britain's cherished oak woodlands.

Although no cases of infection of wild oak have yet been documented in Britain, Forestry Commission scientists have revealed dozens of cases across the UK in rhododendron and viburnum bushes being sold in nurseries.

They fear that once introduced into the wild, the fungal disease, for which there is no known cure, would be impossible to eradicate.

Dutch elm disease resulted in the felling of 30 million elms in the UK in the 1970s. Losing large numbers of Britain's estimated 203 million oaks would severely damage one of the nation's most important habitats.

Observing the threat first hand, Sybil Jack asks: 'When one reads authorities on the history or prehistory of woods, disease is rarely mentioned. Is this a new phenomenon or one which we have overlooked? Are there factors which history can contribute to an understanding of the threat and should we be studying history afresh to see what evidence of past epidemics we have missed?'





**Australian Forest History Society Inc.**

ABN 56 477 824 185

**Membership for Year to 30th June 2003**

Please mail this slip with your cheque or money order for \$25 or \$15 for students (overseas \$30 in **Australian currency please**) made payable to:

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Kingston ACT 2604

These prices do not include GST as the Australian Forest History Society Inc. is not registered for paying or claiming GST.

Renewal

New

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